

## In Memoriam.



Mrs. Mary A. Dixon.

Mrs. Mary A. Payne.



MRS. MARY A. DIXON,

BORN IN RICHMOND, VA., OCTOBER 10, 1838.

DIED IN GREENSBORO, N. C., DEC. 11, 1889.

FOR THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS A CHILD OF THE KING.



## In Memoriam.

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In writing an article upon the lives of these beloved Sisters, their work is so interlocked with the early history of the Greensboro Baptists, that it is impossible to speak of them individually without dwelling largely upon the Church (in its infant struggles) of which they were so much a part.

Sister Dixon moved to Greensboro in 1865 or 1866, some six or seven years after the Church organization in 1859, after Dr. John Mitchell, the first Pastor, had closed his labors. But from Dr. J. B. Richardson, with whom Sister Dixon labored throughout his pastorate, beginning in the winter of '70 or '71, we quote the following: "I preached my first sermon in what was then known as Garrett's Hall. I had but three hearers, Bro. W. B. Crump and Sisters Dixon and Potts. (Sister Payne was not living in Greensboro just at this time.) The above three were the only ones who covenanted to meet my traveling expenses and board, in order that they might hear the Gospel, (as the Baptists hold it) once a month. With the first three hearers (who had called me to the Pastorate of this little church) we organized a Sunday School with Sister Dixon as Superintendent; also organized a weekly prayer meeting, thus unfurling our banner to the breezes of Peco-Baptist Greensboro. I mention the above to show the spirit dominating Sister Dixon.

It was in the face of bitter opposition that she took her stand for Religious Liberty, and her position can be more thoroughly understood when it is known that she was a woman of high culture and superb refinement. Reared in Richmond, Va., the stronghold of the Baptists, with mine own eyes I have seen Sister Dixon on her way to her Sabbath School, wading through snow six to eight inches deep, with a babe in her arms and leading another child by the hand, going thus for a quarter of a mile over a sidewalk not cleared from snow. Such faithfulness justly inspired her pastor. Often I would say: "Sister, how can you face such opposition and struggle on so faithfully?" Her reply invariably was: "Thus my Savior led and I am only trying to follow Him, and I am so happy in the work." Thus we quote but a few instances of the faithful devotion to her Master's cause of this noble woman." And from this nucleus of three sprang forth the growth of this Baptist cause in Greensboro.

The following tribute was passed by the Sunday School December 15, 1889:

WHEREAS, It has pleased God, in His infinite wisdom, to remove from our midst our beloved co-worker, Sister Mary A. Dixon, whose faithful work for many years has endeared her to us, and who in her zeal for the Master was instrumental in the organization of our School, therefore be it

RESOLVED 1st. That as a Sunday School we do deeply feel the loss of our beloved co-worker, yet we one and all must bow to the will of Him who doeth all things well, realizing that our deep affliction is her eternal gain. That to be at rest with Jesus is far better.

RESOLVED 2nd. That we express by an appropriate memorial our sincere and heartfelt sympathy with the stricken family in this their hour of trial; in brotherly love pointing them to Jesus who was Himself "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and who alone can heal their grief stricken hearts.

R. L. VERNON, Superintendent.

JOHN THOMAS, Secretary.

This was the esteem in which Sister Dixon was held by the Sunday School of which she was the first Superintendent. Two beautiful tributes were offered to Sister Dixon's memory by her former Pastors: Rev. Drs. Thomas Hume and W. R. Gwaltney. Dr. Hume writes through *The Biblical Recorder*: "She has been identified for more than twenty-five years—(of my acquaintance with her)—with the varying fortunes of the Greensboro Baptist Church. The close of the war found the "body of Christ" divided and cast down, but she adhered to it in evil as well as good report, and by her faithfulness and energy inspired the weak-hearted and unbelieving. Her religion was a matter of well grounded conviction and unswerving principle, yet surcharged with warm emotion.

"There were a few good men, but what would they have done without the steady, flaming zeal and devotion of this elect woman and her few sisters in the faith."

Rev. W. R. Gwaltney, her Pastor at the time of her death, writes: "Let me give you a few of her last words: "I am so glad I did not wait to make my preparation until now." "I want to tell Jesus how little I have done for Him, and how

much I want to do for him." "I want strength to tell my children that I want them to love Jesus above everything else." Her sister said: "We shall miss you very much." She replied: "We must say, "Thy will be done,"

Thus passed over the river, one of the finest spirits one of the writers of this little memorial ever had the privilege of meeting, and during the six years that followed the burning of the old church, and the building and getting the new church upon a broader, securer basis, Sister Dixon showed the same indomitable spirit that actuated her in the pioneer days—literally dying in the work she loved so well.

MRS. MARY A. PAYNE,

BORN AUGUST 8, 1832.

DIED JANUARY 19, 1904.

SHE WAS THE FRIEND OF THE POOR AND SORROWING.



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## MRS. MARY A. PAYNE.

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Referring again to Bro. Richardson's reminiscences of these two good women:— "Different in temperament and training from Sister Dixon, Sister M. A. Payne, moving from the country after six months of my pastorate in Greensboro, Sister Payne became the active co-laborer of Mrs. Dixon." Sister Payne—then Sister Hyatt—was one of the Charter members of this Church at its organization in 1859, and was a great help from the beginning. Dr. John Mitchell, the first pastor, writes:— "She was a great help to us from the beginning. Of a Methodist family, she remained true to her convictions, a very decided Baptist and true to the Master." "She was patient and quiet, faithful at the post of duty, and ready for work. I could always rely upon Sister Payne. A great comfort to her pastor and one of the best Christian women I have known." God be praised for such faithful women as Sisters Payne and Dixon. It is meet that the Church should praise them. Grace be with you all,

Yours in Christ,

JOHN MITCHELL.

Sister Payne was of especial help to Dr. Richardson in building the house of worship, located on South Elm Street. Bro. Richardson refers to a crisis when a heavy mortgage against the Church was about to be foreclosed:— “I can at this far away day see that Gideon’s Band, Sisters Payne and Dixon, leading, going into the enemies’ camp with the shout of victory. One attack of theirs I shall never forget:— “We had our little Church nearly completed, but there was a note of \$700.00 in the bank, falling due, and we were notified one Saturday that our note would go to protest the following Monday. The pastor was told by the treasurer that there was only \$150.00 to meet it. Sabbath day dawned upon the little band under a heavy burden. They assembled at the meeting house feeling that they had done all they could. After the sermon to thirteen members the situation was discussed. Sister Payne leading the faithful little band said “Let us try.” Sister Dixon’s heartily expressed “Amen” inspired them so that another sacrifice was made, and amid fervent prayers and tears Sister Payne broke the heavy suspense by saying “This House Shall Not be Sold!” Sister Dixon replied:— “Never, Never!” A second effort was made, when a sufficient amount was raised to meet the pressure. These Sisters relied upon the helping power of God—His power to move the people to come to His help, His help against the mighty. Dr. Richardson sums up by saying:— “Never in all my forty years, mostly in pioneer work, have I seen and known such women as

Sisters Payne and Dixon; others their equals or superiors there may have been, but it has not been my fortune to know them. In our earthly feelings Heaven is more attractive, as we think of them there, in that higher service they loved so much on earth."

Brother Richardson herein voices the sentiment of all the older members of the Church who knew these mothers in Israel and their faithful pioneer work, as they laid broad and deep the foundation upon which others have builded.

Fraternally,

W. W. ROWE,

A. W. COOKE,

Committee.





